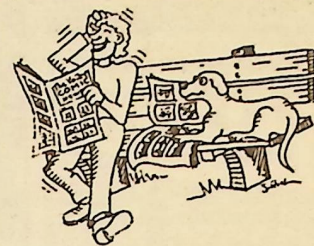


The Valley COMIC N · E · W · S



ISSUE # 55
January 23, 1992

FREE

FEATURES: THE FAR SIDE, DOONESBURY,
CALVIN & HOBBS, VIEWS OF THE WORLD,
TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT, THE BRASS AND FERN,
EARTHWEEK, IZZY GESELL'S *HUMOR ME*,
PRESIDENT BILL, JOE BOB BRIGGS, LEOLD,
LOCAL HEROES

STORIES:
ALL THE PRESIDENT'S YEN
E PLURIBUS UNUM. NYET.
STANDARD BUSINESS PROCEDURES
ELEMENTARY, MR. STONE

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...ENVIRONMENTALISTS ARE
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THEY WOULD SAY THIS TREE
IS CUT. I PREFER TO SAY IT'S
HALF-STANDING...

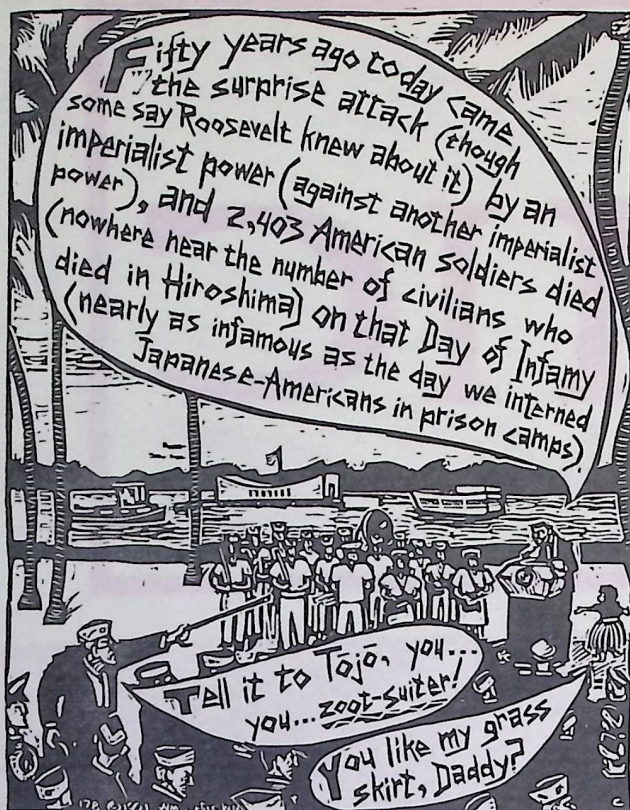


PRESIDENT BILL BY WILLIAM L. BROWN

PRESIDENT BILL

In the recommendation of my campaign staff, I took a world tour to distract the American electorate from my ambitious, but austere, domestic policies. Aside from politicking, I wanted to bolster my New World Entropy foreign policy aims: human rights, global decentralization, regional autonomy, environmentalism, and randomocracy. I began my tour in Eastern Europe, the scene of many promising entropic developments. But, before I continued my travels, my campaign staff urged me to make a side trip to Hawaii for the anniversary of Pearl Harbor Day. ★

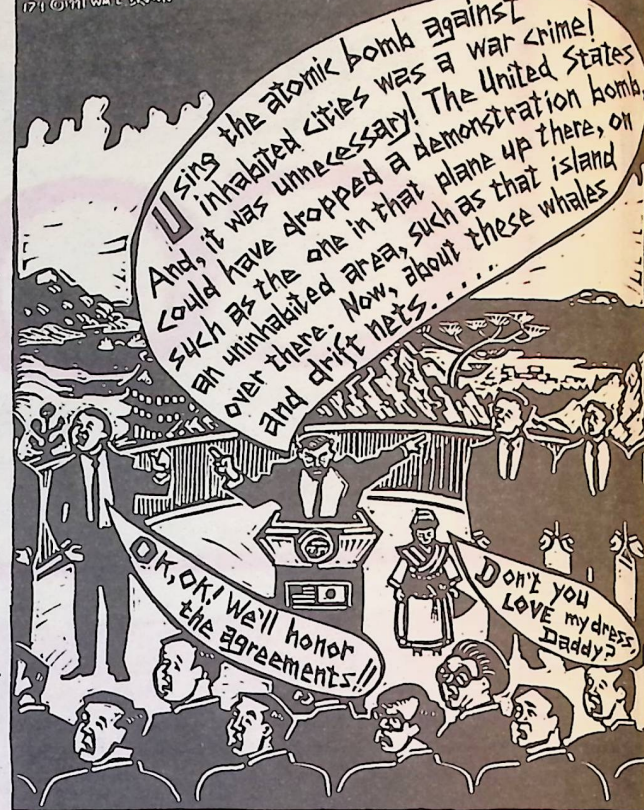
★ ABOLISH ELECTIONS
VOTE FOR PRESIDENT BILL! ★



PRESIDENT BILL

The next stop on my ★ international tour was Japan. My chief concern with the Japanese was environmental. They were persisting not only in hunting whales, but in killing dolphins and other marine life with 30-mile-long drift nets. They ignored worldwide condemnation of these brutal practices, which nearly every nation agreed to refrain from. I hoped to get Japan to honor those agreements. I tempered my criticisms with a long-overdue apology from the United States for the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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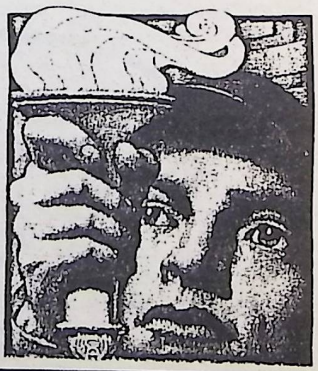
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PAGE THREE

by Mike Chrisman

There was a letter to the editor of the Greenfield, Mass. Recorder not too long ago, from a guy who said his mother-in-law shot herself in the finger with a miniature pistol which she just happened to be wearing as an earring.

As fate would have it, this is *exactly* the kind of thing Our Founders had in mind when they voted for the Second Amendment, which reads, "Congress shall make no law restricting the right of people to shoot themselves with earrings." It's a little-known fact that several constitutional representatives wanted to extend the selection of exploding personal accessories to include wool mittens and those women's stoles that look like flat dead weasels.

Fortunately, cooler heads prevailed, which is why today we see pink Cadillacs driven by Mary Kay Cosmetic salespeople with bumperstickers that say, "If earrings are outlawed, only outlaws will wear earrings."

The trouble with this scenario, and I'm speaking now earnestly and directly to Robert Bly, is that *men* don't yet seem to have weapons in their ears. Why is this? Wouldn't you imagine, with all the terrific maiming devices men have invented through the years — I'm thinking here of implements like the car door and the do-it-yourself tub installation — that by now *some* men would have said, "Hey, I love my shoulder holster, but I'd feel a whole lot nattier packing the Uzi on the old lobe, ya know?" I'm pretty sure if Robert Bly promoted this fashion statement, a bunch more men would go crashing into the woods to get naked and drum and sweat their heads off, because if anybody laughed at them when they broke down sobbing, they could waste them. "Sorry, Phil; guess my insecurities are showing." Blam!

But even aside from the crucial issue of which sex has the most firepower bumping against their neck, there's this highly valuable economic note: somebody's missing a whale of an opportunity in jewelry retail. I, for one, can think of no better way to pep up a post-holiday clearance sale than to slap a big sign across your store window: "Gold Hoops, Hypo-Allergenic Posts, Tactical Nuclear Clip-ons — Reduced 30%!" That would bring in the really smart shoppers, especially in certain rural areas where most people have the same last name as the sheriff.

There's just one thing I worry about in this whole affair, and if you'll look closely, you'll see it wasn't mentioned in that letter (above) to the Greenfield (Home Of Teensy Revolvers) Recorder. And I only point it out because I'm a really excellent parent, probably much better than most people reading this (not to mention any names). Because I know that no matter what, whenever I give my daughter earrings, I always tell her — and I mean *always* — I tell her *never wear them if they're loaded!* Then she sighs, and says, "Oh, Dad," which means she loves me even though I have a brain the size of a flatworm. Then she hangs her guns in her ears and goes outside to bag a muskrat.

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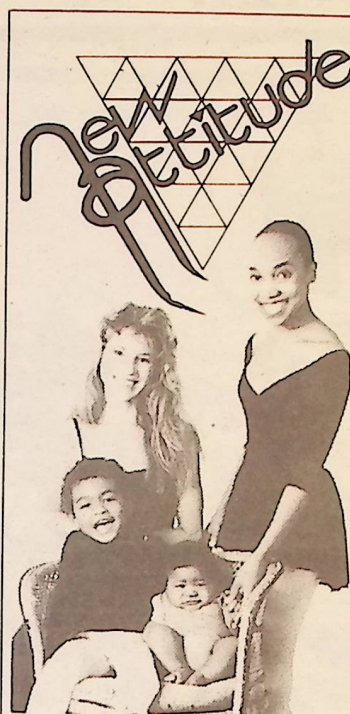
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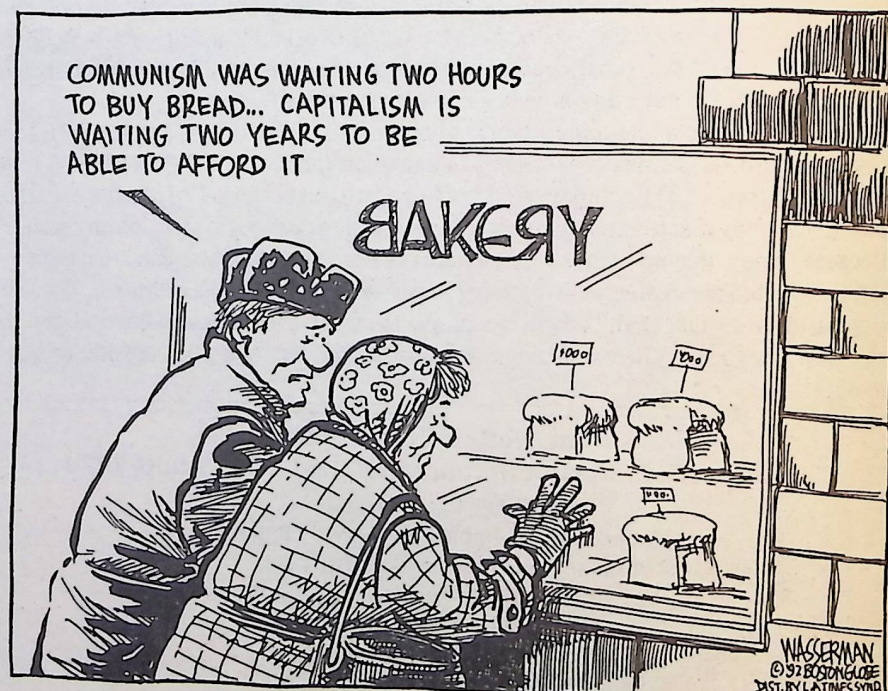
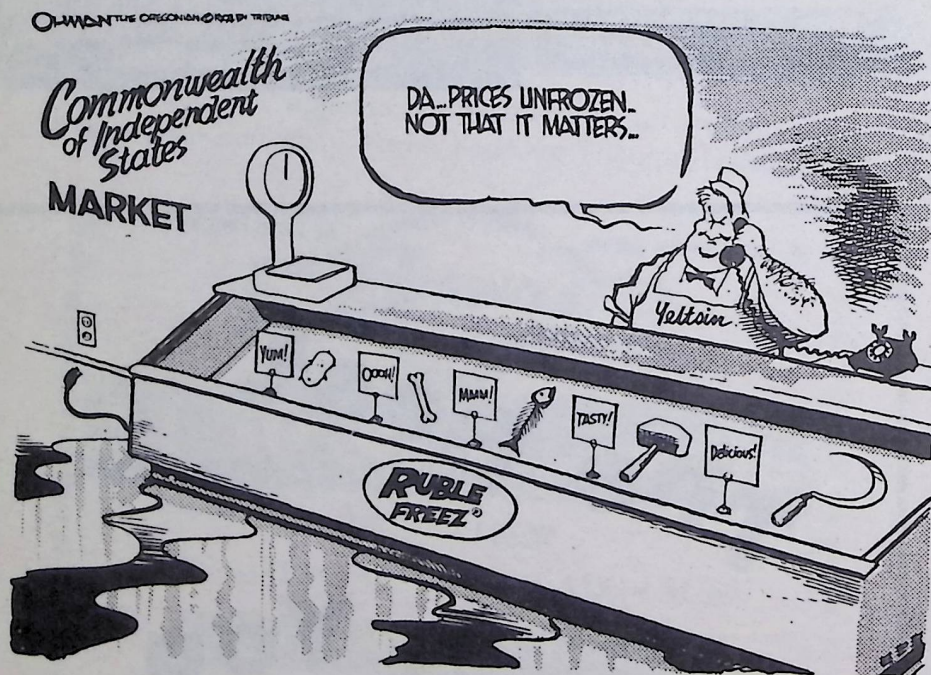
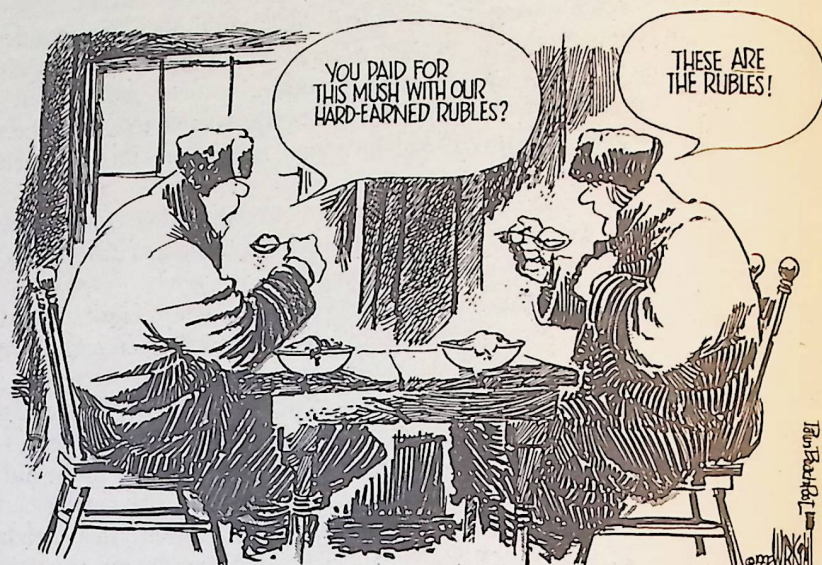
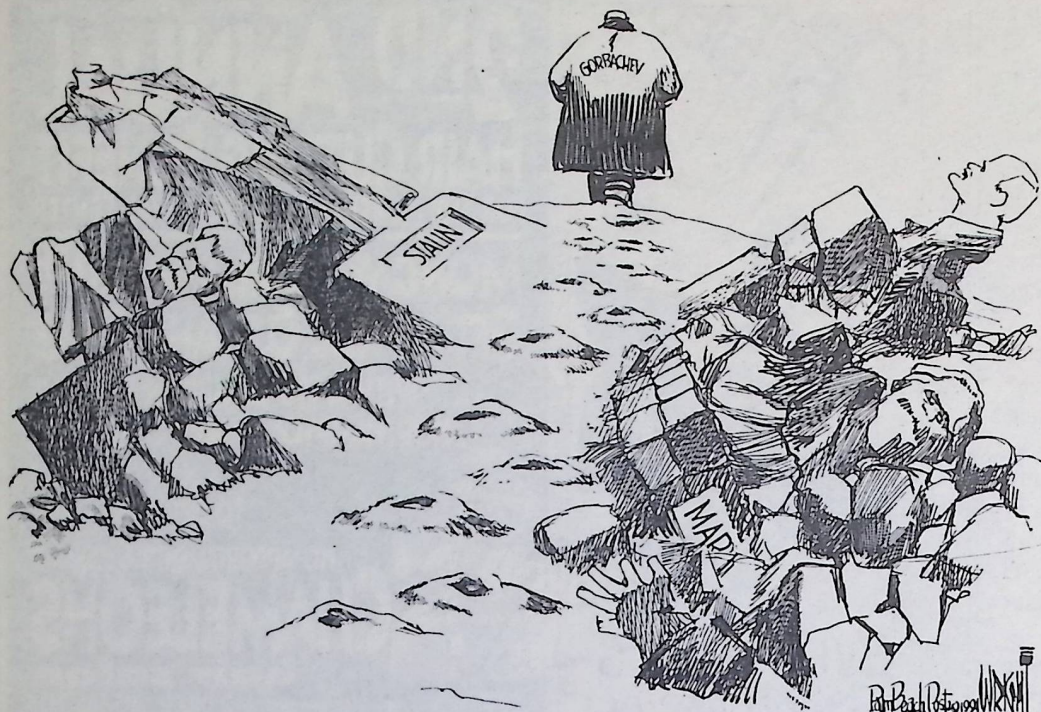
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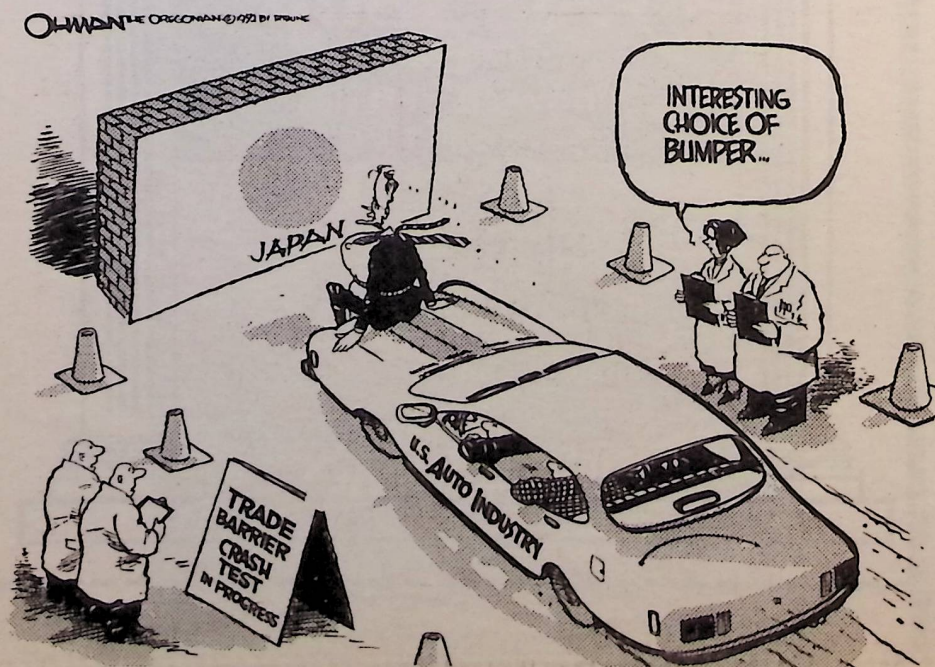
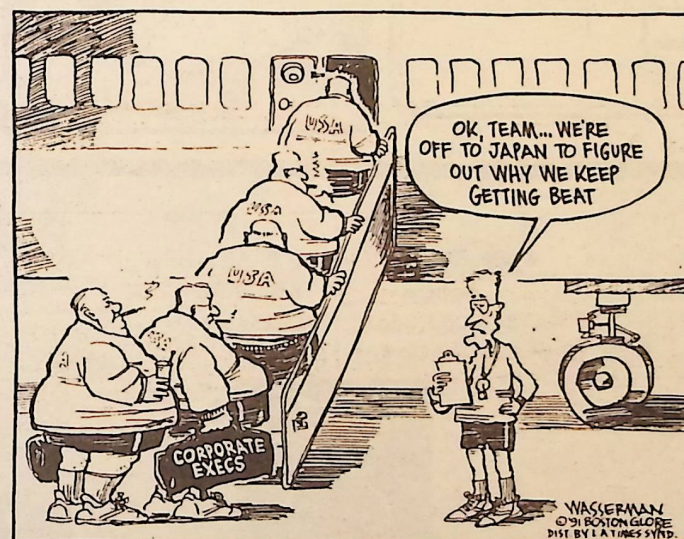
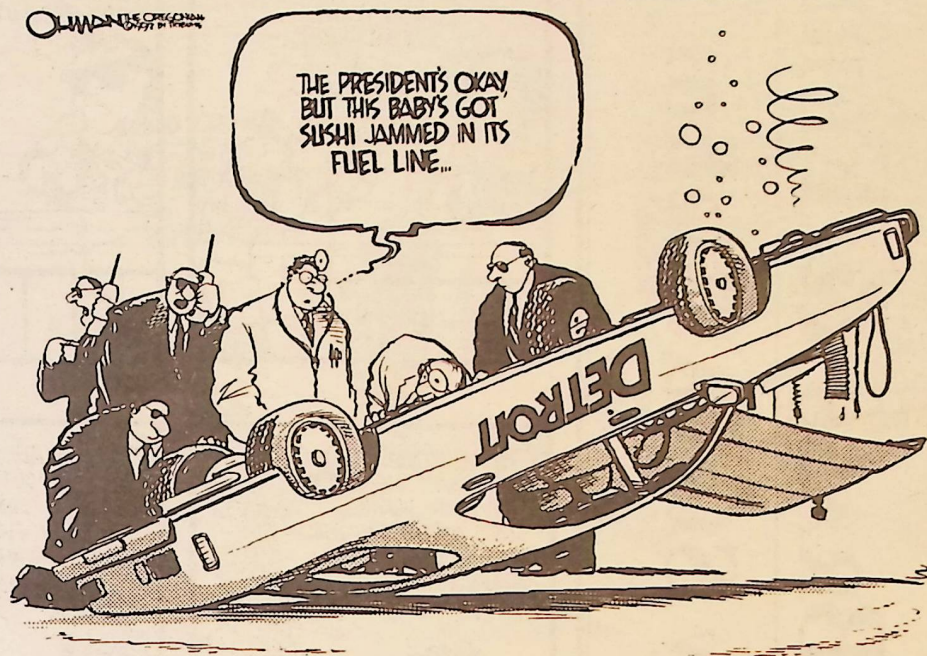


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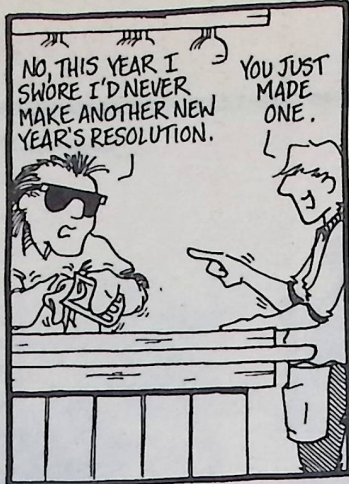


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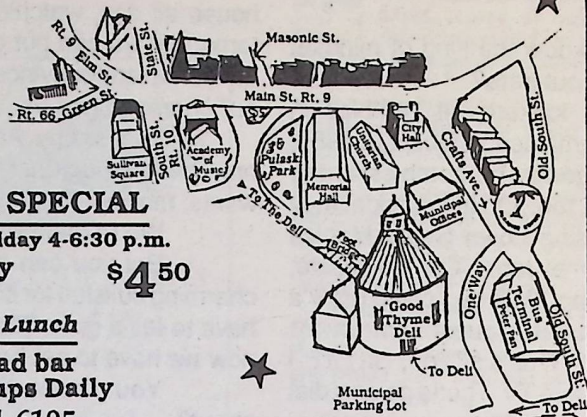
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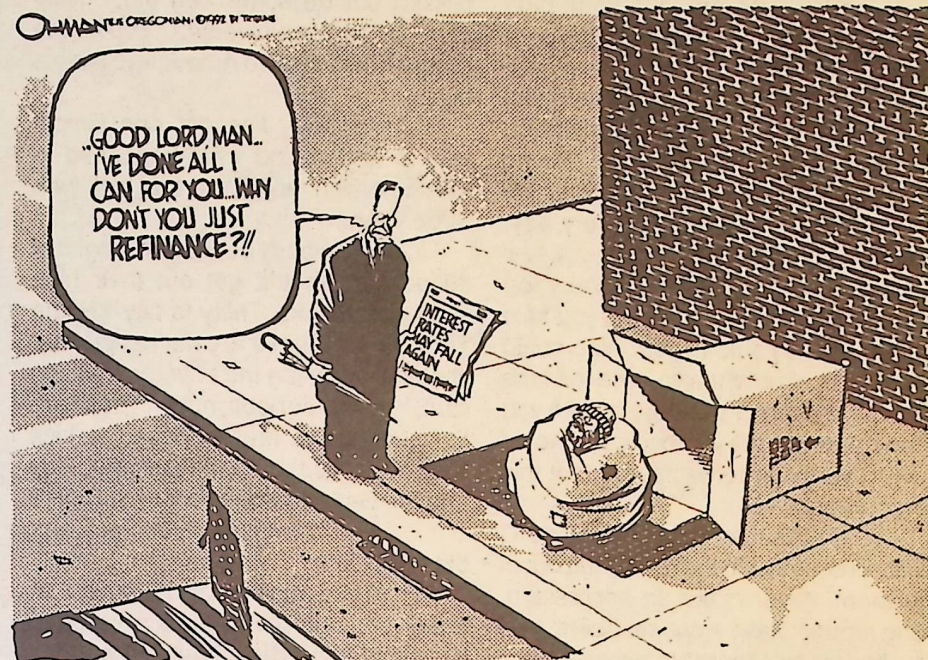
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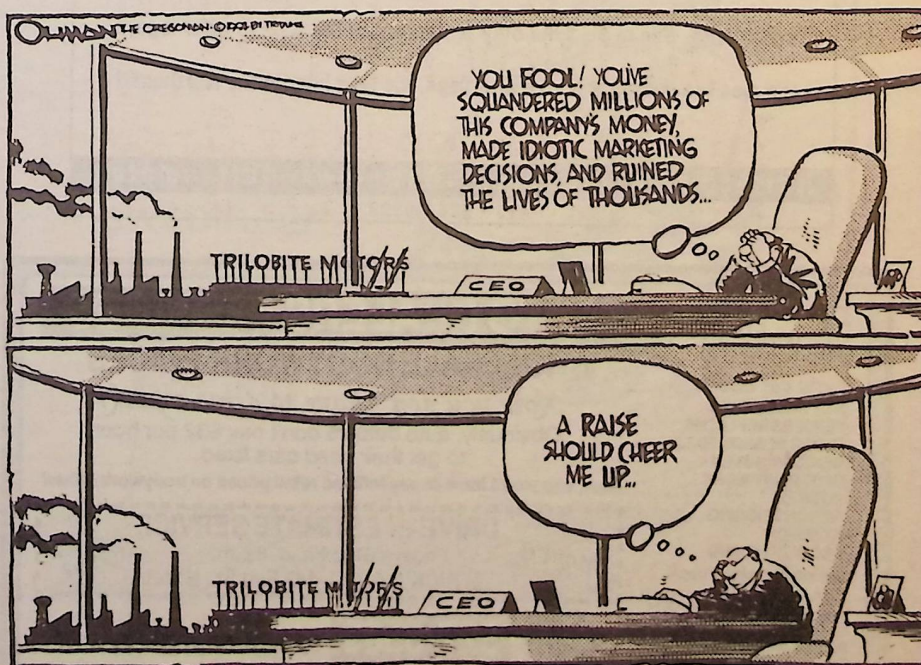


... WHO GETS STUCK IN ONE OF
THE SAND TRAPS OF LIFE.



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JOE BOB BRIGGS

You ever get out your high school yearbook and find pictures of zombies in there?

Or maybe you'd call 'em ghost people. They're people you remember. You know *exactly* who they are. Some of 'em you spent 12 years of your life with. You saw 'em almost every day. But when you see the face now, you feel *nothing*. Zip. You hear no voice. You have no memories of anything you said to them or they said to you. You could get more excited when you see the face on a Betty Crocker package. And if you hadn't picked up the yearbook, you would never *ever* have remembered that this person was alive.

It's like they exist but they don't exist. They drift into the room, drift out of the room, never make an impression, hang around, have a couple beers, and now they're out there somewhere, bearing children or something — only their gynecologist doesn't notice them either. And the men are probly going to "Iron John" Wildman Weekends to try to figure out where they lost their lives.

In the thirties people called 'em "wall flowers." But that's way too flashy a description for these people. "Linoleum people" is what they are.

Or, even scarier, maybe *you* are the Linoleum Person, and they're

blissed out on some Zen trip. *They* understand the universe. *You're* the guy with the massive American Express bill.

Anyhow, I've got one simple way to understand what happened to the American economy the last two, three years:

Everybody between the ages of 30 and 50 should get out their high school yearbooks. Thirty-to-fifty is Prime Time, right? These are the people that should be running the country, building stuff, handing out jobs, right? These are the people that are supposed to kick hiney against the Japanese whiz kids and the German Doitchie Boys. Right?

Look in those yearbooks: Zombie People.

Thirty-eight-year-old guys that got divorced and moved back home to live with Mom. Guys that did so many drugs between 1967 and 1979 that they have little lines around their eye sock-ets, from buggin' 'em out so often. "Performance artists" who have never made more than 20 bucks a night for their entire 15-year careers. Fat guys who watch too much "Star Trek." All the people on "Love Connection." Guys that sell insurance for ten years, then freak out when they realize they're getting old and they *haven't ever been to*

New Zealand.

You know the kind of mindset I'm talking about here?

They looked like zombies in 1970, they remained zombies in 1980, and they're gonna be zombies in the *next* Century, too. On the outside, they may be cruising down Santa Monica Boulevard in a Jag. On the inside, they're thinking, "Maybe I could grow a pony-tail and get a guest shot on '21 Jump Street.' That's still on, isn't it? I gotta watch more TV. I gotta go on a diet and watch more TV."

There hasn't been a generation like this since the time when the emperor of Rome was a transvestite. (Emperor Elagabalus, for the scholars out there.)

It's not like anybody *we know* is out there designing new tool-and-die plants that the Germans have to spy on. It's not like Lisa Salvatini, from your 11th-grade biology class, suddenly devoted herself to science and developed a new strain of hybrid wheat that will feed the Russians for the next ten years.

What the heck have we got to *sell* anybody?

But what's amazing is that we're like a pit bulldog who's had all his legs cut off, but he still *believes* he can fight. We still think we can lay around the

house all day, watching TV, and then tomorrow we can put on a suit and go downtown and convince somebody, with our *charm*, to hire us.

That's why America now has only *one* product that the whole world wants: movies.

We're great bullstuff artists.

But you can only listen to the charming bullstuff for so long before you have to tell a guy, "That was great, but now *we* have to get back to work."

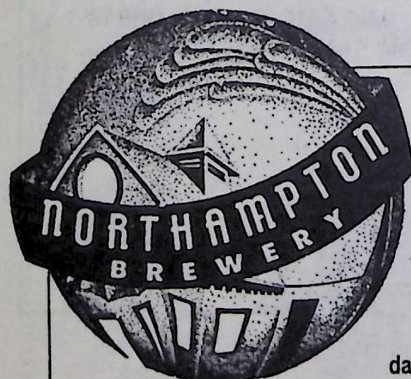
You know what I'm talking about?

Everybody says "the economy" is the problem.

The economy be Us.

To discuss the meaning of life with Joe Bob, or to get his world famous "We Are the Weird" newsletter, write Joe Bob Briggs, P.O. Box 2002, Dallas, TX 75221. Joe Bob's Fax line is always open: 214-368-2310

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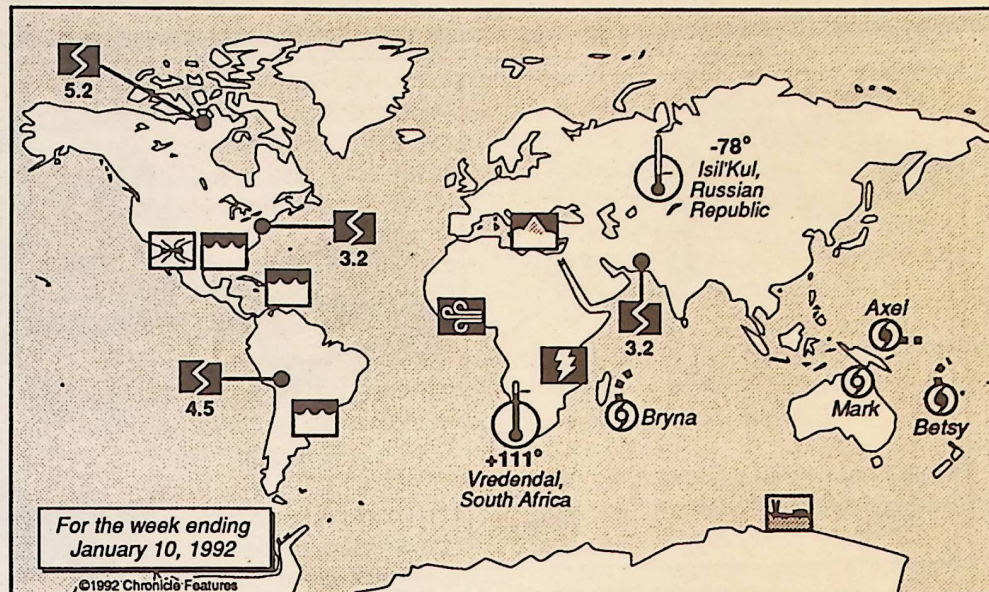
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Floods

Flashfloods and mudslides killed scores of South Americans during several days of severe weather that struck a wide area from Rio de Janeiro to northwestern Argentina. At least 30 people were killed after a river of mud and water devastated several Argentine towns north of Cordoba. In Brazil, a six-hour tempest set off flash flooding around Rio. A family of seven was buried alive by a mudslide as they slept in the nearby mountain resort of Teresopolis.

Torrential rains also hit hard in the Caribbean. Widespread flooding in Puerto Rico claimed at least 20 lives and forced more than 800 people from their homes.

Massive flooding in parts of Texas receded, but polluted floodwaters flowing into Galveston Bay put more than 80 percent of the state's most productive oyster reefs off limits to fishermen. Health officials don't know how long it will be before it will be safe to start harvesting the shellfish again.



Tropical Storms

Tropical cyclone Axel lashed several of the Caroline Islands with winds of up to 110 miles per hour and hazardous ocean waves. The storm was still gaining strength late in the week.

The New Hebrides were pounded by high surf and gale-force winds from tropical cyclone Betsy as it skirted the South Pacific island group. A weak and disorganized tropical cyclone Mark formed over the Gulf of Carpentaria in northern Australia.

In the Indian Ocean, tropical cyclone Bryna lost force as it passed between Madagascar and the French island territory of Reunion.

Lightning Deaths

Seven people were killed and 36 others seriously injured by lightning from severe thunderstorms that struck northwestern and central Tanzania.

Harmattan

A sharp chill from a seasonal desert wind known as the Harmattan killed at least 17 people in Nigeria, while low visibility from the accompanying dust storms brought the northern half of the country to a standstill. All-time record low temperatures to near freezing were reported during the four-day cold wave in the city of Kaduna. The subtropical warmth which normally prevails over the West African nation is occasionally displaced by the Harmattan winds which bring with them the wintry chill of the Sahara Desert during January and February.

Earthquakes

In an very quiet week for worldwide seismic activity, earth movements were detected in Pakistan, New Jersey, along the Peru-Bolivia border, and in Canada's Northwest Territories.

Fire Ant Fire

Officials in the Texas town of Bartlett have determined that a fire which killed an elderly woman was caused by an army of fire ants that crawled into an electrical panel and triggered a short circuit. Sixty-eight-year-old Minnie Gibson died of smoke inhalation during the fire that started in her mobile home. Fire ants, accidentally brought into Texas from South America during the 1940s, have an attraction to electrical fields and often cause short circuits in everything from air conditioners to airport runways. Mrs. Gibson had struggled to control a growing number of fire ants in her yard with pesticides just prior to her death.

Greek Smog

Air pollution soared to such high levels in Athens that the government banned private cars from the city center.

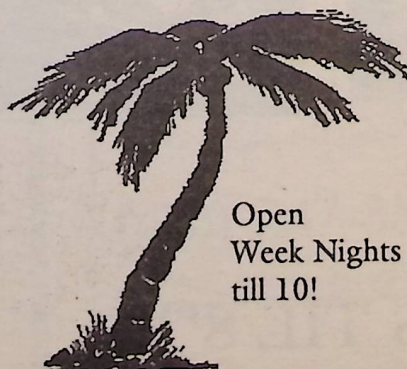
Icebound

Stuck in the ice off the coast of Antarctica, a supply ship with 62 bored people aboard has become the world's largest penguin-watching platform. The German-owned Icebird, leased by the Australian Antarctic division, was returning from Casey Base when it became trapped in an unseasonably thick ice pack. In the meantime, Emperor penguins have flocked to the stranded ship to check out the unusual visitors. "I really don't know who is watching who," joked voyage leader Brian Taylor. "The penguins have surrounded the ship, but at least we aren't alone out here." If the vessel doesn't break free soon, the Australian ship Aurora Australis may be dispatched on a rescue mission.

Additional Sources: Fiji Weather Bureau, Australian Bureau of Meteorology, U. S. Climate Analysis Center, U. S. Earthquake Information Center, and the World Meteorological Organization.



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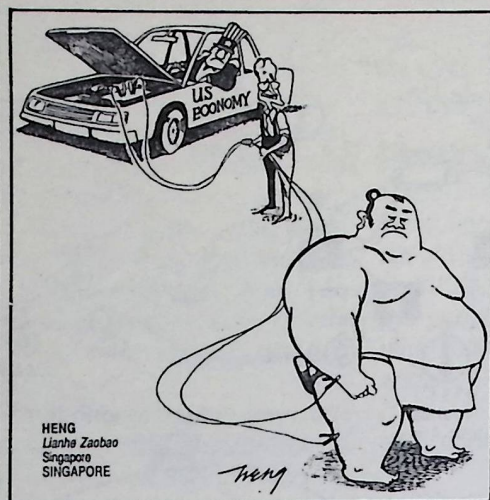
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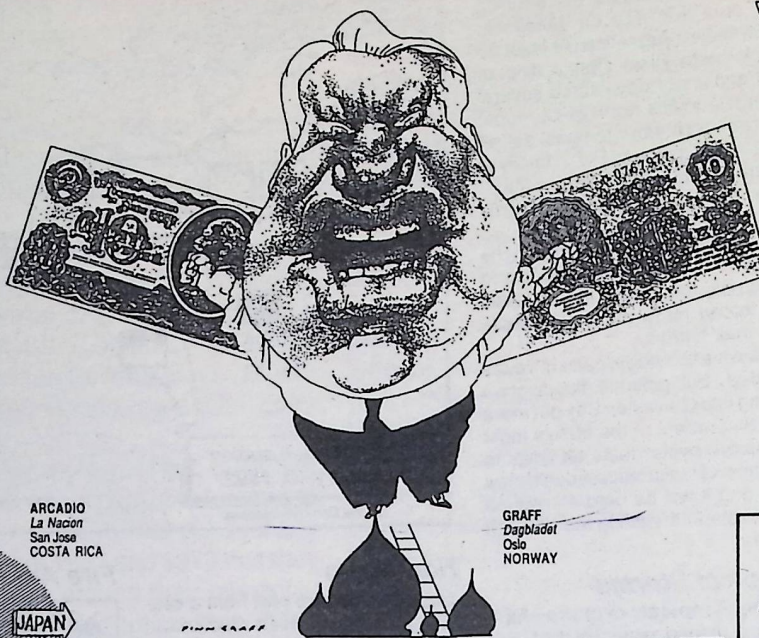
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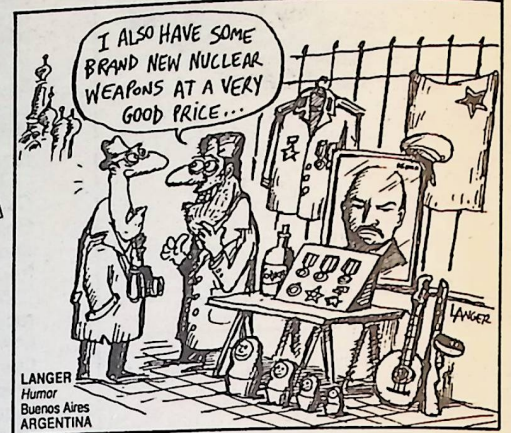


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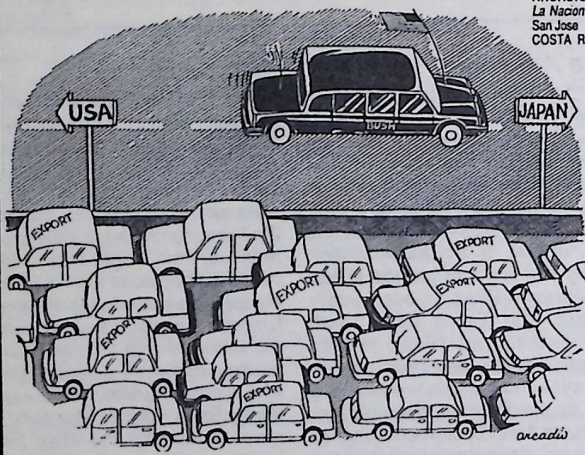


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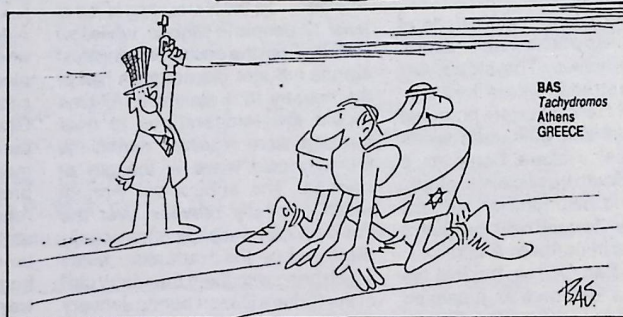
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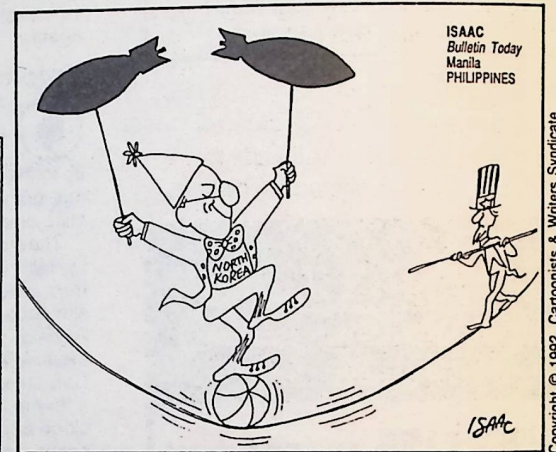
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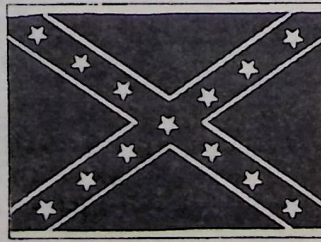
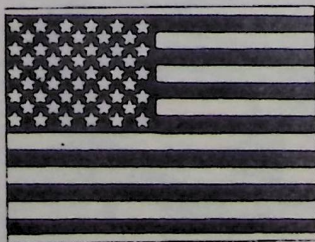
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TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT by L.M. Boyd

In Derbyshire, England, remains a village called Flash. Gaudily-dressed gypsies once favored the place. And gave us another adjective for certain clothing — "flashy."

In the baseball lingo of Canada, a "beauty shot" is a base hit.

This, says one medical specialist, is how you can tell whether you're overweight: "Stand stark naked in front of a full-length mirror. Turn around slowly. If you look too fat, you're too fat."

Q. What's a "scopophilia?"

A. A voyeur. One who likes to watch live erotic action.

That old legal term "seven seas" has confused our common language of geography, has it not? Professors say, There are the four oceans, only four, in descending order of size: Pacific, Atlantic, Indian, and Arctic. You knew that?

Maybe you've forgotten that a swordfish is twice as fast as a kangaroo.

Collegiate testers believe they can measure a student's creativity. They report their findings indicate the longer a graduate student stays in school, the lower said student scores on their creativity tests.

When in Mantua, Italy, you order "stracotto" — don't miss it — you'll get stewed donkey.

The day Mary Todd married Abraham Lincoln, she knew how to speak fluent French, but had no idea at all about how to fix lunch. That, according to the historical footnotes.

In proportion to body size, if your tongue were as long as an anteater's, you could zap it out there about three feet. Pretty picture, what?

It is a natural matter for the Golden Frogs of Panama to remain in the mating embrace for several months until the female lays her eggs.

Q. What kind of gas makes the bubbles in Swiss cheese?

A. Carbon dioxide.

It was the old Chicago Record-Herald that editorialized in 1903 that our little toes were useless, so no doubt would disappear within the next 100 years from then. Lot of futurists know what. But few ever come close to when.

Diarrhea kills more people than cancer.

In a chemistry test at the University of Texas, it's reported, a freshman identified "chlorine" as "a night-club dancer."

First use of the word "discover" in 1555 was applied to what Christopher Columbus did. The word was unknown when he did it.

One who undertakes funeral arrangements in England now offers a different package: For the equivalent of \$8000, a potential customer can contract to be cremated and interred in any of numerous cooperating pubs.

All stars rotate.

If you gained six pounds between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, you hit the American average, exactly.

A client corrects: "The most widely used drug worldwide is not nicotine, aspirin, or alcohol — it's caffeine!"

Speed of light depends on what that light is traveling through, says a science student. A lot of particles travel faster through water than light travels through water.

When you see "10w/40 on a container of engine oil, note the "w" stands for winter, not weight.

Is there a "No. 1 key" to long-term marital satisfaction? Some marriage counselors now say so. These particular experts claim it's "the male partner's ability to respond sensitively and give emotional support." Our Love and War man is studying it.

Q. What one word is common to the largest number of different languages?

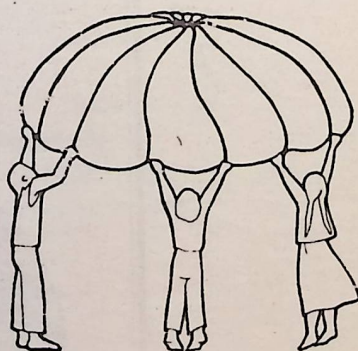
A. "Zero." Or so contend some scholars. Our own Language man, however, suspects certain latterday words such as "pizza" and "hamburger" have overtaken "zero" for that distinction. Research goes on.

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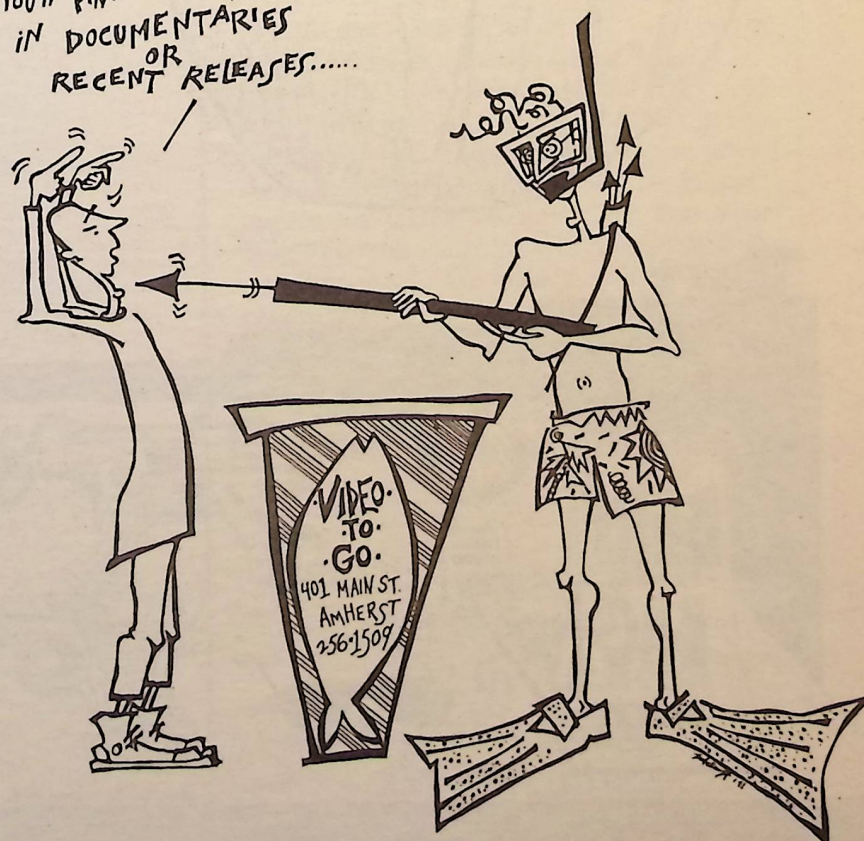
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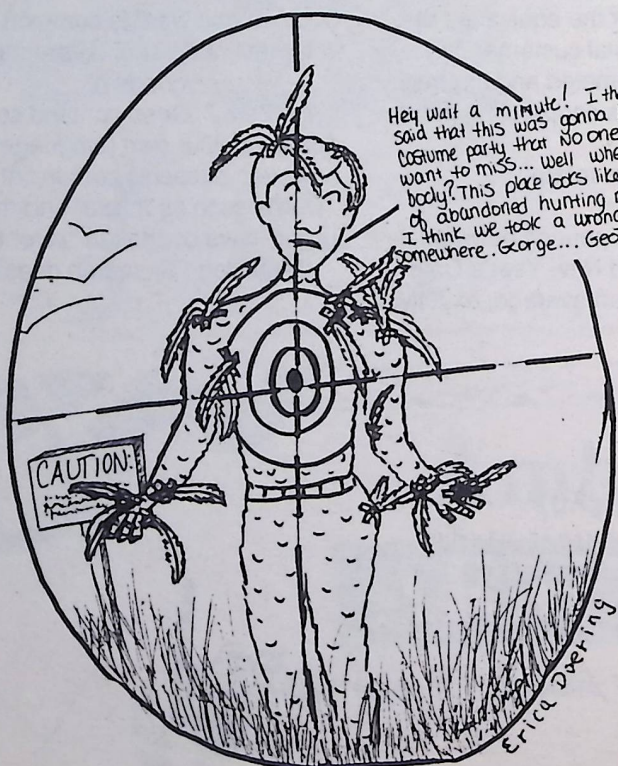
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THINK'R



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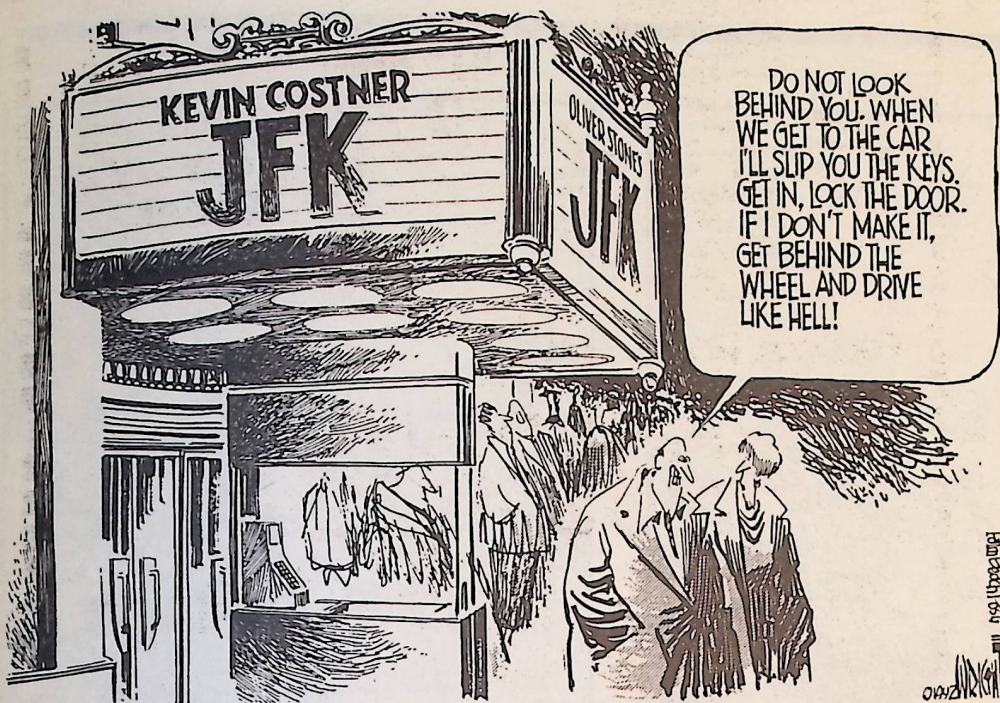
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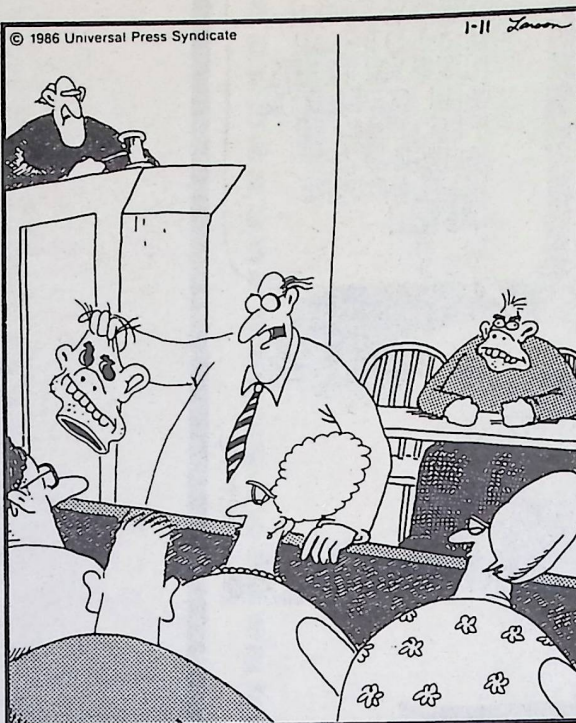
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THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



"And here's the jewel of my collection, purchased for a king's ransom from a one-eyed man in Istanbul. . . . I give you Zuzu's petals."



"Coincidence, ladies and gentlemen? Coincidence that my client just *happened* to live across from the A-1 Mask Co., just *happened* to walk by their office windows each day, and they, in turn, just *happened* to stumble across this new design?"



"Hey! Hey! Hey! . . . Who's the wiseguy that just turned down the thermostat?"

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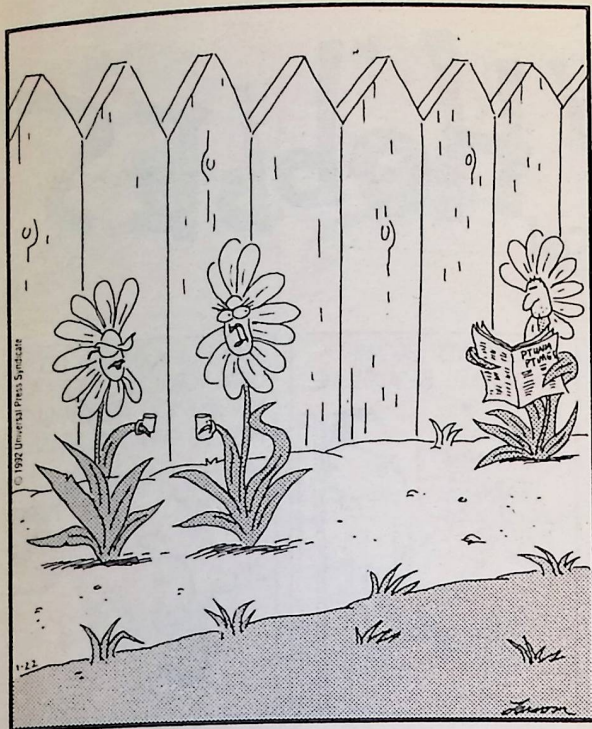
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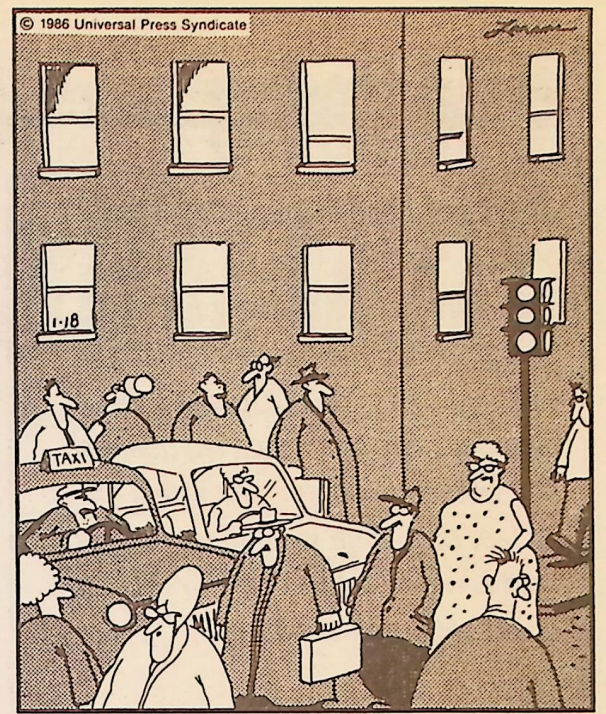
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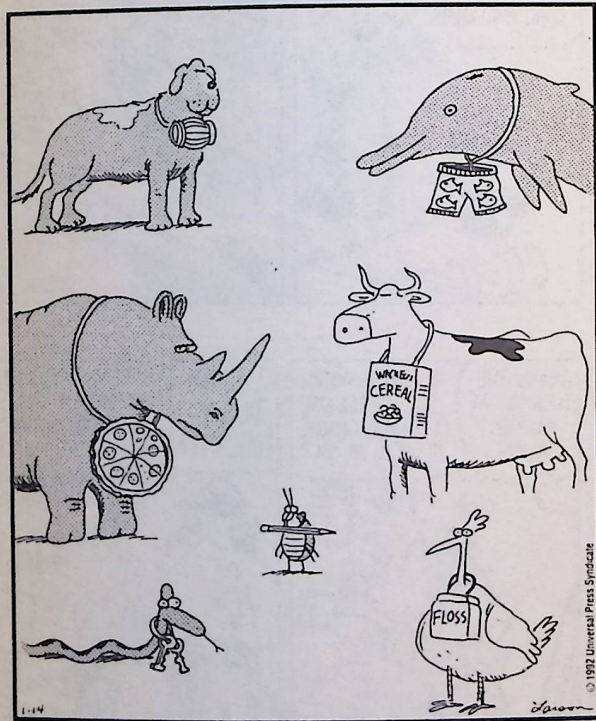
"I don't have any hard evidence, Connie — but my intuition tells me that Ed's been cross-pollinating."



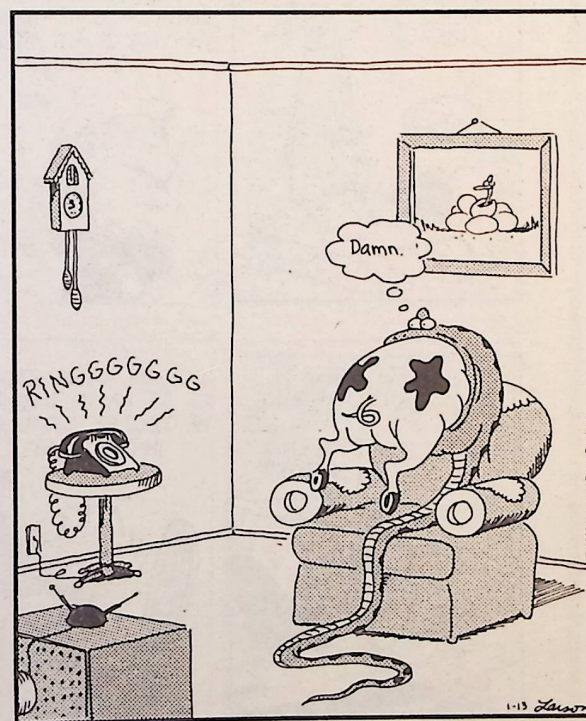
"OK, let's start the exam. Stinking caps on, everyone — stinking caps on."



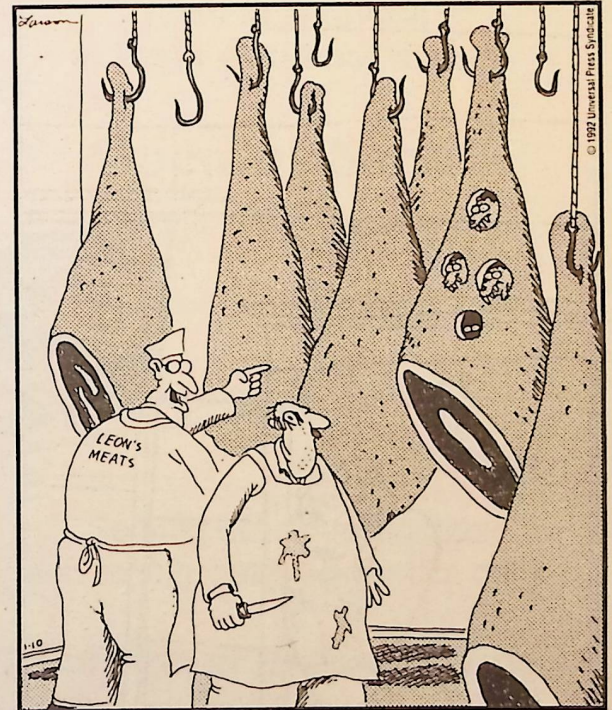
They weren't the most evil people in the world — nor the best. They were the Village of the Darned.



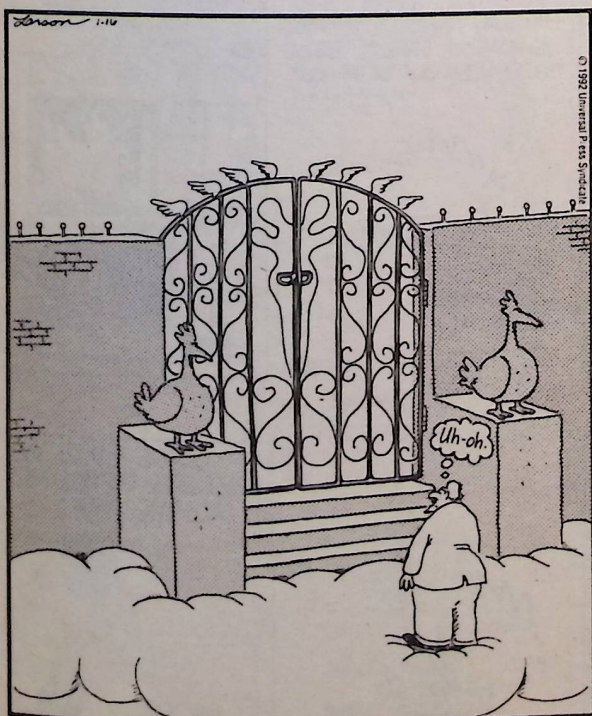
Some of our more common "rescue" animals



RINGGGGGGG



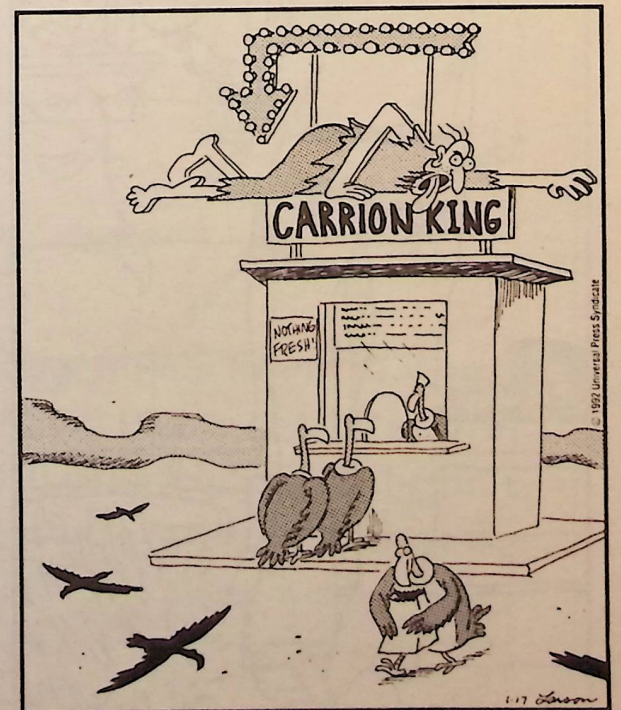
"Ooo! Look, Leon! An entire family of meatchucks!"



Colonel Sanders at the Pearly Gates



In the corridors of Clowngress



The Valley Comic News • January 23, 1992 15

Boy, have I had some bad luck with girls.

The night before my very first date, the girl called me to say her cat got sick and had to be put to sleep the next day. So, she cancelled because she wanted to spend time with it on its last day. She wanted to pet it and hold it. I told her I'd come over and we could both pet her kitty.

She said no. Some people simply won't let you into their lives, or their kitty's. Boy, does that hurt.



calvin and Hobbes

by BILL WATTERSON

WHY DO I HAVE TO GO TO BED NOW? I NEVER GET TO DO WHAT I WANT!



IF I GROW UP TO BE SOME SORT OF PSYCHOPATH BECAUSE OF THIS, YOU'LL ALL BE SORRY!!



NOBODY EVER BECAME A PSYCHOPATH BECAUSE HE HAD TO GO TO BED AT A REASONABLE HOUR.



YEAH, BUT YOU WON'T LET ME CHEW TOBACCO EITHER! YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT MIGHT PUSH ME OVER THE BRINK!



GO TO BED, CALVIN.

BEHOLD THE DREADED TOBOGGAN: SUICIDE SLED.



IT'S UNIQUE DESIGN SENDS A BLINDING SPRAY OF SNOW ON IT'S PASSENGERS AT THE SLIGHTEST BUMP. NOTE, TOO, THE LACK OF ANY STEERING MECHANISM.



YES, THIS SLED IS TRULY A HAZARD TO LIFE AND LIMB.



WHEEE OOMPH! EEEEE



BOY, IS IT COLD! CAN'T WE TURN THE HEAT UP?



HEAT IS EXPENSIVE, CALVIN. JUST PUT ON A SWEATER.

LOOK, THE THERMOSTAT GOES ALL THE WAY UP TO 90 DEGREES! WE COULD BE SITTING AROUND IN OUR SHORTS!



LEAVE THE THERMOSTAT ALONE, CALVIN.



I CAN ALMOST SEE MY BREATH. I'LL JUST CRANK IT UP TO 75, OK?

I SAID DON'T TOUCH IT!



GEE, MY HANDS ARE SO NUMB, I CAN'T MOVE THE SWITCH. GUESS I'LL PUT ON A SWEATER.



OOH, YOU LOOK COLD, CALVIN! THERE'S A FIRE MADE. WHY DON'T YOU GO WARM UP?



NOTHING BEATS SITTING BY A ROARING FIRE AFTER YOU'VE BEEN OUT IN THE COLD.



OF COURSE, SOME PEOPLE SAY WHY BOTHER GOING OUTSIDE FIRST?

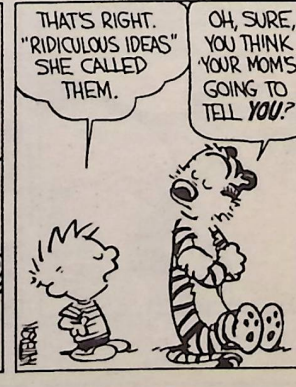
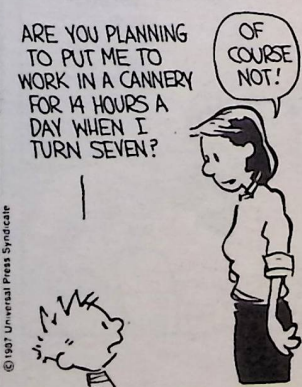
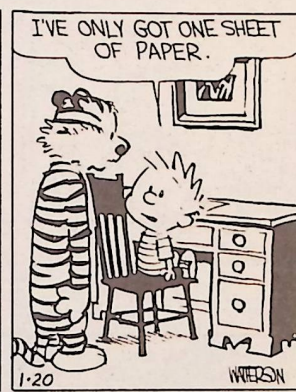
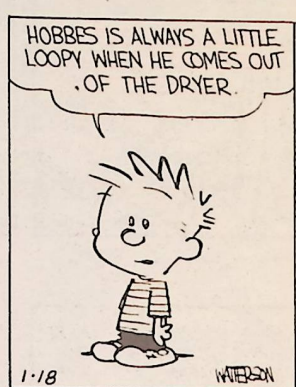
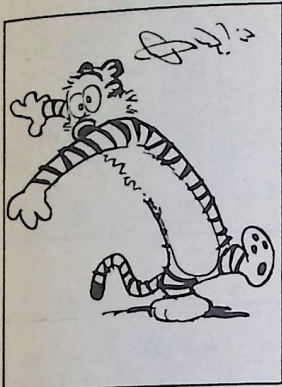


CALVIN, I HOPE YOU TOOK YOUR BOOTS OFF BEFORE YOU WALKED ACROSS THE FLOOR.



OF COURSE I DID! YOU DON'T NEED TO TELL ME ALL THE TIME!





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humor me

by Izzy Gesell

Is it inborn in humans to lie about whether we were asleep when the phone rang and woke us up? No matter what time of day or night the call comes in, we are ashamed to admit we were napping. If people were computers, "No" would be the default to the question "Did I wake you?" Why is it embarrassing to admit we sometimes take a lie-down?

What gets us in trouble is our hearing, the faculty that works best while we slumber. Awakened out of a deep sleep by the sound of the phone ringing, the human being can't see or feel. Taste is impossible due to a mouthful of dry phlegm taffy. The nose registers a pungent mixture of morning-breath and essence of sheet. Attempts at speech result in sounds ordinarily heard only through a drinking glass placed against an apartment wall.

The ears, though, work so well the person on the other end can clearly be understood. "Hi. Did I wake you?" "Uh, no. Oz thinkin a sumptin when da fone ran." "Good, 'cause I wanted your opinion on a life-or-death matter." "Oh. Sure. Shoot." Short sentences are best because it is possible to catch some significant sleep while the other person is talking. Never having come fully awake, the trip to REM-land is short.

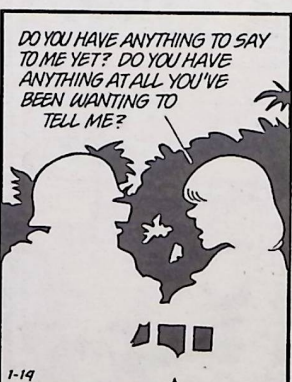
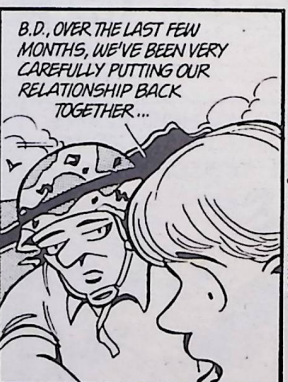
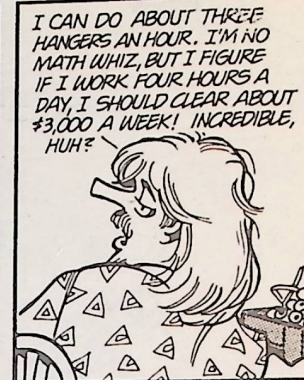
The best way to keep from being caught in the lie is to get the caller to impart some information such as an address or phone number. This gives you the chance to say, "wade da minute. Lemme gedda pencil." Instead of going anywhere, put your head down and catch 27 seconds of heavenly SLEEP, then bring the phone back to your ear and say, "OK, whatsa numba?" As the number is given, snooze for 7 more seconds. Convince the caller you are listening by hypnotically repeating the numbers while still in a deep sleep. If the message is important, try tracing the number in the air with your finger. You won't remember it, but at least your intentions are good.

The greatest danger lies in allowing the conversation to carry on too long. The best sleepwalkers use whatever mental capacity is available to them to opt out of the dialogue ASAP. Because you can't remember any part of the exchange except your lie, it's best to use an outside stimulus to get off the phone. Imply that you were active before the call and were interrupted doing something important. "Let me call you back after I finish polyurethaning the floors." Or "my jogging partner is at the door and I can't keep her waiting." Be careful of alliteration. "I'm baking banana-bran biscuits for breakfast" is a great closer, but the odds of getting it out without blowing the entire act are astronomical. Remember the mouth taffy.

In my worst nightmare, two people call at the same moment, forcing me to deal with call-waiting and dual conversations. Of course, I could look on that as a challenge. Let me get a pencil.

Doonesbury

BY G.B. TRUDEAU





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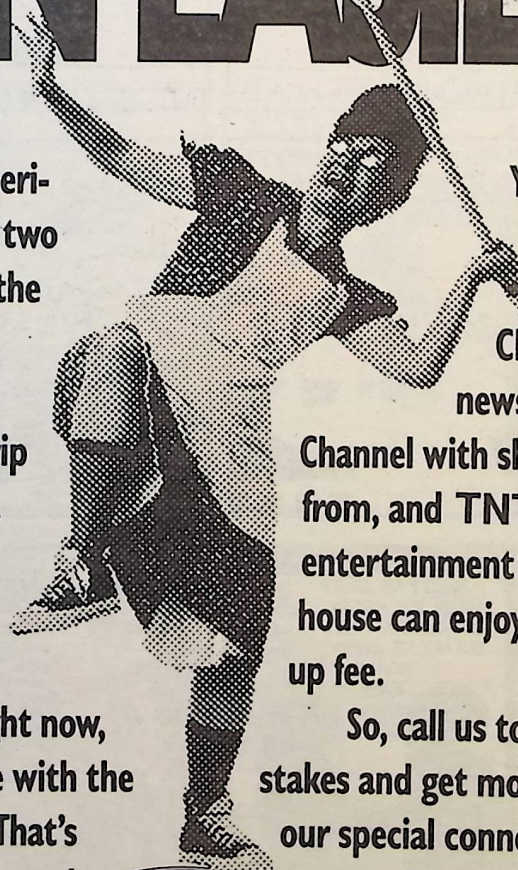
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